FEATURES

Winchester minister Jane Ring Frank wins Lifetime Achievement Award

CHRIS STEVENS | CORRESPONDENT

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Choral Arts New England has named Winchester Minister of Worship and the Arts Jane Ring Frank the 2025 Life Time Achievement award winner. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/CHRIS STEVENS

Everyone wants to be the best in their chosen field — or at least r
right?

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Turns out First Congregational Church's Minister of Worship and the Arts Jane Ring Frank achieved that milestone without even realizing it.

Choral Arts New England has named Frank the 2025 Life Time Achievement award winner.

"Earning acclaim for artistic excellence and dedication to innovative programming, Ms. Frank is a conductor and leader whose work has influenced and strengthened New England's choral community," reads the announcement of her good fortune.

Frank called it all extraordinary.

"It's humbling, lovely and super surprising," she said. "Totally out of the blue."

Frank, who is also the director of the Concord Women's Chorus, said she noticed the chairman of Choral Art New England in the audience of CWC's spring show, but thought it was because of a grant they'd recently received. Now she realizes it was probably part of the vetting process because it wasn't long after that she received an email telling her of the award.

To celebrate Frank, there will be a ceremony at First Congregational Church, along with a performance by the Concord Women's Chorus with Frank conducting. There will also be a chance for everyone to join in and sing Bach's "Dona Nobis Pacem."

> ***Event details***

> *When: Sunday Oct. 26, 2025, at 3 p.m.*

> *Where: First Congregational Church, main sanctuary, 21 Church S*
> *Winchester.*

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> *Tickets: The event is free and open to all, with a reception to follow and ample parking. RSVP's are needed for planning purposes.*

How she got here

When she was 12 and living in Los Angeles, Frank went to hear her older brother sing with the famous conductor Paul Salamunovich.

"I went to the concert and I turned to my mom and said, 'That's what I will do when I grow up,'" she said.

She didn't mean sing like her brother, she meant conduct, like Salamunovich. And that's what she did after what she called a series of lucky breaks.

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Frank started taking piano lessons at age 5, heard "this music that moved me at 12" and by high school had found her first mentor.

"I followed him to university," where she got a chance to meet Salamunovich and tell him her story, Frank said.

Frank said later, because she was a "fairly accomplished pianist," she was hired to play for The American Choral Directors Association. Then after moving East, she began her conducting career at Harvard, serving as director of chapel music at the Episcopal Divinity School.

When she landed in Boston, Frank said she also landed at the Arlington Street Church, where she found a group of supportive friends and met her husband.

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"Again, I was lucky," she said.

She also had the opportunity to serve as the founding conductor of Boston Secession, where for nine years, they were able to make what she called high level music.

Frank also conducted the Philovox Ensemble, E.C. Schirmer's resident professional recording chorus. Her job there was to conduct and record all new music so when people inquired about a piece they could hear what it sounded like.

"It was a small group and they were just the best singers in Boston," Frank said. "We rehearsed very little and recorded a lot."

She also conducted the North Shore's Cantemus Chamber Chorus and has been artistic director of the Concord Women's Chorus for nearly 30 years, where it's said, "She brings to CWC and our audiences an unerring ear for intonation and sound color, a command of choral and orchestral conducting, uncompromising scholarship, and a love of connecting with listeners."

One of the highlights of Frank's career, however, was an unexpected trip to Myanmar. There she served as guest conductor at a music school for college age kids, who had no opportunity to go to university because they had been shut down amid civil unrest.

"It was really beautiful," she said, adding it was exciting and inspiring to communicate with the young people through music.

That one trip turned into six, where each January she would return to work with students. She credits her supporters at First Congregational Church for allowing her the time to travel and though she can no longer

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Myanmar due to an ongoing civil war, she still supports the program through fundraising.

And Frank has served as minister of worship and the arts at the First Congregational for 23 years. She said the joy of being in Winchester is that the job is about more than conducting.

“It’s turned into something really beautiful,” she said. “It’s about creating sacred art. What a joy to be able to be doing this.”

The award

The Lifetime Achievement Award, presented annually since 1994, honors individuals who have made exceptional contributions to choral singing and its culture in New England. And they, along with First Church Congregational will celebrate Frank on Sunday at 3 p.m. and the public is invited to attend.

“It will be chaotic, cacophonous and wonderful,” Frank said of the event. “And I’ll love it.”

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The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Winchester community came together last week at the Griffin Museum of Photography for the inaugural Black History and Culture Celebration, an evening filled with music, student creativity, and powerful messages about equity, unity, and the enduring legacy of Black

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amounted to nothing on Sunday afternoon. But during the Feb. 22-23 blizzard, Winchester News once again asked residents to send their snow photos. And here is what we received! Solmaz Amirnazmi said her daughters and

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Performance Hall. With the school and its performances' growing in popularity, the hall and many of its amenities are due for an upgrade. The performance hall is one of the main areas that the school seeks to

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Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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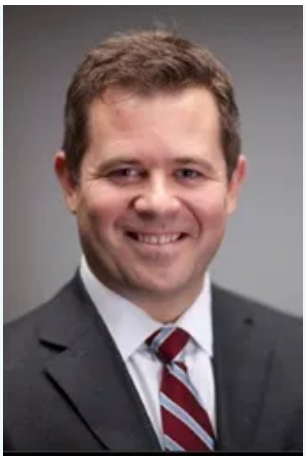

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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